

submitted to Ministry of Environment & Forests, Govt. of India, 34 pp.

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## 27. MIGRATION OF BLUE MORMON BUTTERFLY *PAPILIO POLYMNESTER* IN MUMBAI (MAHARASHTRA)

The presence of the Blue Mormon butterfly *Papilio polymnester* in and around Mumbai was recorded by W.F. Melvin at Sewree in March 1889 and A.E.G. Best (1951) at Tulsi lake. D.E. Reuben had observed them in 1960-62 and suggested that this butterfly appears seasonally in the Pali Hill (Bandra) area. Serrao (1978) observed a Blue Mormon flying east to west on September 23, 1970. He recorded a number of individuals flying in the same direction till end October, 1970. He also observed many Blue Mormons feeding on flowers till March 1971 in the Tulsi lake environs.

Haribal (1986) recorded a few sightings of these butterflies at the Indian Institute of Technology, Powai, Mumbai every year from 1978 to 1982. However, in all these sightings, they did not appear to be flying in any particular direction, except near Matunga station, where the butterfly was definitely flying westwards.

The first author (NC) saw them at Goregaon, Mumbai on September 15, 1999 around noon. The flight was rapid, at 30 m above ground level, and was westwards. A similar observation was made on September 18, 1999.

Interestingly, the second author (VH) has seen another live specimen at Hornbill House, Colaba, Mumbai on September 22, 1999, flying east to west. Earlier, this species was observed by the first author (NC) at Goregaon on August 28, 1995. A female Blue Mormon was sighted at Khar (Mumbai) in the first week of September (Isaac Kehimkar *pers. comm.*). The butterfly laid eggs on a *Citrus* plant.

From these observations, it is evident that the Blue Mormon is a seasonal migrant, and arrives in Mumbai during late August to September. As it is usually found in hilly regions around 350 m above msl, with heavy rainfall, it is possible that migration depends on good rainfall in Mumbai during August and September.

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